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October 1991

Wilderness Study Report

Statewide Overview

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As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interest of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

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Oregon Wilderness Study Report

Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

October 1991

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

WASHINGTON

RECORD OF DECISION

The following are the wilderness recommendations for 92 wilderness study areas (WSAs) in the State of Oregon. These recommendations were developed from the findings of a 15-year wilderness study process by the Department of the Interior and Bureau of Land Management. The wilderness studies considered each area's resource values, present and projected future uses of the areas, public input, the manageability of the areas as wilderness, the environmental consequences of designating or not designating the areas as wilderness, and mineral surveys prepared by the U.S. Geological Survey and Bureau of Mines.

Based on our review of those studies, I have concluded that 1,278,073 acres within 49 study areas should be designated as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System and that 1,528,525 acres within 76 study areas should be released from wilderness study for uses other than wilderness. The acreage recommendations for each WSA, with which I concur, are listed in the following table. The Wilderness Study Report accompanying this decision includes, a detailed discussion of the recommendations and maps showing the boundaries of each area.

Secretary of the Interior

10/7/91

Date

WSA Name	Study	WSA Number	Acres Recommended Wilderness	Acres not Recommended Wilderness
Devils Garden Lava Bed	Statewide	OR-1-2	28,160	1,520
Squaw Ridge Lava Bed	Statewide	OR-1-3	21,010	7,330
Four Craters Lava Bed	Statewide	OR-1-22	9,100	3,500
Sand Dunes	Statewide	OR-1-24	0	16,440
Diablo Mountain	Statewide	OR-1-58	90,050	23,070
Orejana Canyon	Statewide	OR-1-78	14,800	9,800
Abert Rim	Statewide	OR-1-101	23,760	0
Fish Creek Rim	Statewide	OR-1-117	11,920	4,770
Guano Creek	Statewide	OR-1-132	10,350	0
Spaulding	Statewide	OR-1-139	0	69,530
Hawk Mountain	Statewide	OR-1-146A	69,640	0
Sage Hen Hills	Statewide	OR-1-146B	0	8,520
Malheur River-Bluebucket Creek	Statewide	OR-2-14	0	5,560
Stonehouse	Statewide	OR-2-23L	0	21,325
Lower Stonehouse	Statewide	OR-2-23M	0	8,090
Sheepshead Mountain	Statewide	OR-2-72C	45,705	8,685
Wildcat Canyon	Statewide	OR-2-72D	34,830	0
Heath Lake	Statewide	OR-2-72F	0	20,520
Table Mountain	Statewide	OR-2-72I	25,185	15,407
West Peak	Statewide	OR-2-72J	0	8,535
East Alvord	Statewide	OR-2-73A	0	22,240
Winter Range	Statewide	OR-2-73H	0	15,440
Alvord Desert	Statewide	OR-2-74	69,165	181,895
Mahogany Ridge	Statewide	OR-2-77	0	27,940
Red Mountain	Statewide	OR-2-78	0	16,215
Pueblo Mountains	Statewide	OR-2-81/ NV-020-642[1]	25,550	46,540
Rincon	Statewide	OR-2-82	19,428	84,537
Alvord Peak	Statewide	OR-2-83	0	16,825
Basque Hills	Statewide	OR-2-84	0	141,410
High Steens	Statewide	OR-2-85F	36,440	34,340
South Fork Donner und Blitzen	Statewide	OR-2-85G	0	37,555
Home Creek	Statewide	OR-2-85H	22,015	4,575
Blitzen River	Statewide	OR-2-86E	21,970	34,210
Little Blitzen Gorge	Statewide	OR-2-86F	4,700	4,800
Bridge Creek	Statewide	OR-2-87	0	14,545
Pine Creek	Statewide	OR-2-98A	0	[illegible]200
Sheep Gulch	Statewide	OR-2-98C	0	741
Indian Creek	Statewide	OR-2-98D	0	208
Aldrich Mountain	Statewide	OR-2-103	0	9,395
Castle Rock	Statewide	OR-3-18	0	6,200
Beaver Dam Creek	Statewide	OR-3-27	0	19,580
Camp Creek	Statewide	OR-3-31	17,770	1,430
Cottonwood Creek	Statewide	OR-3-32	7,520	1,180
Gold Creek	Statewide	OR-3-33	15,800	0
Sperry Creek	Statewide	OR-1-35	5,360	0
Cedar Mountain	Statewide	OR-3-47	0	33,600
Dry Creek	Statewide	OR-3-53	0	23,500
Dry Creek Buttes	Statewide	OR-3-56	0	51,800
Owyhee Breaks	Statewide	OR-3-59	10,596	2,784
Blue Canyon	Statewide	OR-3-73	12,700	0
Upper Leslie Gulch	Statewide	OR-3-74	3,000	0

WSA Name	Study	WSA Number	Acres Recommended Wilderness	Acres not Recommended Wilderness
Slocum Creek	Statewide	OR-3-75	7,600	0
Honeycombs	Statewide	OR-3-77A	36,555	2,445
Wild Horse Basin	Statewide	OR-3-77B	0	12,680
Lower Owyhee Canyon	Statewide	OR-3-110	65,360	10,375
Saddle Butte	Statewide	OR-3-111	0	86,300
Palomino Hills	Statewide	OR-3-114	0	54,600
Bowden Hills	Statewide	OR-3-118	0	59,900
Clarks Butte	Statewide	OR-3-120	0	31,490
Jordan Craters	Statewide	OR-3-128	23,225	4,675
Willow Creek	Statewide	OR-3-152	26,130	4,435
Disaster Peak	Statewide	OR-3-153/ NV-020-859 [2]	17,540	1,300
Fifteenmile Creek	Statewide	OR-3-156	51,260	30
Oregon Canyon	Statewide	OR-3-157	42,900	0
Twelvemile Creek	Statewide	OR-3-162	26,240	3,340
Upper West Little Owyhee	Statewide	OR-3-173	62,500	0
Lookout Butte	Statewide	OR-3-194/ ID-16-48A[3]	0	65,200
Owyhee River Canyon	Owyhee Canyon Lands	OR-3-195/ ID-16-48B[4]	152,040	38,660
Thirtymile	Statewide	OR-5-1	7,332	206
Lower John Day	Statewide	OR-5-6	20,384	1,636
North Pole Ridge	Statewide	OR-5-8	5,830	539
Spring Basin	Statewide	OR-5-9	5,982	0
Deschutes Canyon - Steelhead Falls	Ochoco Nat. Forest and Crooked River Nat. Grasslands EIS/RMP	OR-5-14	0	3,240
Badlands	Statewide	OR-5-21	32,030	191
North Fork	Statewide	OR-5-31	0	11,225
South Fork	Statewide	OR-5-33	17,001	2,630
Sand Hollow	Statewide	OR-5-34	8,391	400
Gerry Mountain	Statewide	OR-5-35	0	20,700
Hampton Butte	Statewide	OR-5-42	0	10,600
Cougar Well	Statewide	OR-5-43	0	18,435
McGraw Creek	Statewide	OR-6-1	0	497
Homestead	Statewide	OR-6-2	0	7,001
Sheep Mountain	Statewide	OR-6-3	7,040	0
Mountain Lakes	Statewide	OR-11-1	334	0
Soda Mountain	Statewide	OR-11-17	5,867	28
North Sisters Rock	Statewide	OR-12-8	3	0
Zwagg Island	Statewide	OR-12-14	5	0
Western Juniper RNA	ISA Report	OR-5-5 (ISA)	0	600
Lost Forest RNA	ISA Report	OR-5-24 (ISA)[5]	0	8,000
Little Sink RNA	ISA Report	OR-8-1 (ISA)	0	80
Brewer Spruce RNA	ISA Report	OR-11-10 (ISA)	0	210
Douglas-Fir RNA	ISA Report	OR-12-1 (ISA)	0	590
	Total		**1,278,073**	**1,528,525**

[1]Portion of WSA (600 acres) in Nevada included in the Nevada Statewide Report.
[2]Portion of WSA (13,200 acres) in Nevada included in the Nevada Statewide Report.
[3]Portion of WSA (34,400 acres) in Idaho included in the Idaho Statewide Report.
[4]Portion of WSA (34,980 acres) in Idaho included in the Idaho Statewide Report.
[5]Portion of ISA (960 acres) included in the Sand Dunes WSA.

Table of Contents

Overview Document **Page**

The Wilderness Review 1
The Recommendation 4
Key Study Issues 5
Summary of Public Comments on the Studies 7
Other Pertinent Information Relating to Oregon Staterwide Recommendations 9

Volume 1

Devils Garden 1
Squaw Ridge 11
Four Craters 21
Sand Dunes 31
Diablo Mountain 39
Orejana Canyon 51
Abert Rim 59
Fish Creek 69
Guano Creek 81
Spaulding 91
Hawk Mountain 101
Sage Hen Hills 113
Malheur River/Bluebucket 121
Stonehouse 131
Lower Stonehouse 141
Sheepshead Mountain Group 151
- Sheepshead Mountains
- Wildcat Canyon
- Heath Lake
- Table Mountain
- West Peak
- Palomino Hills

Alvord Desert/East Alvord 171
Winter Range 191
Mahogany Ridge 199
Red Mountain 213
Pueblo Mountain 223
Rincon 241
Alvord Peak 255
Basque Hills 265
High Steens/Little Blitzen Gorge 277
South Fork of Donner and Blitzen River 301
Home Creek 311
Blitzen River 323
Bridge Creek 339
Strawberry Mountain 349
- Pine Creek
- Sheep Gulch
- Indian Creek

Aldrich Mountain 359

Castle Rock 367
Beaver Dam Creek 377
Camp Creek Group 385
Camp Creek
Cottonwood Creek
Gold Creek
Sperry Creek
Cedar Mountain 403
Dry Creek 413
Dry Creek Buttes 423
Owyhee Breaks 433
Blue Canyon 447
Upper Leslie Gulch 457
Slocum Creek 465
Honeycombs 473
Wild Horse Basin 487
Lower Owyhee Canyon 495
Saddle Butte 511
Bowden Hills 521
Clarks Butte 531
Jordan Craters 541
Trout Creek Mountains Group 553
Willow Creek
Disaster Peak
Fifteenmile Creek
Oregon Canyon
Twelvemile Creek
Upper West Little Owyhee 575
Lookout Butte 587
Owyhee River Canyon 597
Thirtymile/Lower John Day 617
North Pole Ridge 631
Spring Basin 641
Deschutes Canyon/Steelhead Falls 651
Badlands 665
North Fork 677
South Fork/Sand Hollow 687
Gerry Mountain 701
Hampton Butte/Cougar Wells 709
McGraw Creek 719
Homestead 727
Sheep Mountain 737
Mountain Lakes 747
Soda Mountain 753
North Sisters Rocks and Zwagg Island 763

Volume II

Appendix
Instant Study Area Reports
Western Juniper RNA
Douglas-Fir RNA
Brewer Spruce RNA
Little Sink RNA
Lost Forest RNA

The Wilderness Review

This report culminates a 15 year effort by the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), to complete a wilderness review of public land in Oregon as required by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976.

Although the Wilderness Act of 1964 directed other federal agencies to inventory their lands for wilderness characteristics, it did not apply to BLM-managed public lands. FLPMA, however, applied the goals and criteria of the Wilderness Act to BLM lands as well, and directed the Department to report to the President by October 21, 1991, 15 years from the date of the Act.

Consequently, over 13 million acres of public land in Oregon were inventoried for wilderness characteristics. The Oregon and California Railroad Company lands (O&C Lands) managed by BLM were exempted from the wilderness review required by Section 603 of FLPMA. During the inventory, from 1978 to 1980, BLM held 27 public meetings throughout the state and received and analyzed nearly 4,500 public comments. Areas throughout the state were then designated as wilderness study areas (WSA) that contain 5,000 acres or more of contiguous BLM land, are roadless islands of any size, or are roadless areas of sufficient size to make practical their preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; generally appear to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature; and provide outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. In addition, the WSAs usually contain supplemental values consisting of ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic or historic value. The primary goal of the wilderness study process was to recommend wilderness designation for those areas where wilderness was determined to be the most appropriate use of the land and its resources.

The inventory process resulted in designation of 87 WSAs totalling 2,789,710 acres, or about 20 percent of the BLM public lands in Oregon subjected to the inventory. Five additional areas called Instant Study Areas totalling 9,480 acres were subjected to an accelerated wilderness inventory as required by FLPMA. Their recommendations are also included in this report.

Four WSAs overlap state lines and their study was coordinated with the BLM office in the adjoining state. Only the Oregon acreage is included in this report. The remaining acreage is included in the Nevada and Idaho Wilderness Study Reports.

The Wilderness Studies

The areas were studied as part of land use planning efforts. BLM managers began the wilderness study by comparing the benefits of wilderness and nonwilderness management in a series of land use plans. Twenty-five public meetings were held to discuss alternatives considered in the plans. Preliminary wilderness suitability and nonsuitability recommendations were developed by 1983 in 11 new or amended land use plans. A statewide Wilderness Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was then prepared which analyzed the environmental impacts of wilderness designation or nondesignation of eighty-five WSAs. A Draft EIS was filed in 1985, and a Supplement was filed in 1987. The Final EIS was filed in 1990, and its recommendations reflected public comment received orally at 24 formal public hearings and in writing from 3,300 letters and other documents. Two WSAs were studied in separate documents, one in the Owyhee Canyonlands EIS prepared by BLM and the other by the Forest Service in the Ochoco National Forest and Crooked River National Grasslands EIS. The input and data received from the extensive public involvement have been major factors in forming the recommendations.

The wilderness study areas addressed in this report include three categories of areas. The majority of WSAs were studied under Section 603 of FLPMA and are greater than 5,000 acres in size, are roadless and substantially free of human imprints. Roadless islands of any size were also studied under this category. There are 79 such areas studied under Section 603 making up the large majority of acreage studied, listed in Table 2.

Areas Studied under Section 202 of FLPMA

The WSAs in the second category are studied under the planning authority of Section 202 of FLPMA and are generally less than 5,000 acres in size. Some have special wilderness values or are contiguous to National Forest designated wilderness or study areas, and are, therefore, of sufficient size to make practical their preservation in an unimpaired condition. Another group of lands studied under Section 202 are tracts which were acquired after the Draft EIS was published. Many Oregon WSAs have small

Table 2 - Section 603 Wilderness Study Areas, 5,000 Acres or Larger and Roadless Islands

UNIT NUMBER	UNIT NAME	STATE	DISTRICT	ACRES
OR-1-2	Devils Garden Lava Bed	OR	Lakeview	29,680
OR-1-3	Squaw Ridge Lava Bed	OR	Lakeview	28,340
OR-1-22	Four Craters Lava Bed	OR	Lakeview	12,600
OR-1-24	Sand Dunes	OR	Lakeview	16,440
OR-1-58	Diablo Mountain	OR	Lakeview	113,120
OR-1-78	Orejana Canyon	OR	Lakeview	24,600
OR-1-101	Abert Rim	OR	Lakeview	23,760
OR-1-117	Fish Creek Rim	OR	Lakeview	16,690
OR-1-132	Guano Creek	OR	Lakeview	10,350
OR-1-139	Spaulding	OR	Lakeview	69,530
OR-1-146A	Hawk Mountain	OR	Lakeview	69,640
OR-2-14	Malheur River-Bluebucket Creek	OR	Burns	5,560
OR-2-23L	Stonehouse	OR	Burns	21,325
OR-2-23M	Lower Stonehouse	OR	Burns	8,090
OR-2-72C	Sheepshead Mountains	OR	Burns	54,390
OR-2-72D	Wildcat Canyon	OR	Burns	34,830
OR-2-72F	Heath Lake	OR	Burns	20,520
OR-2-72I	Table Mountain	OR	Burns	40,592
OR-2-72J	West Peak	OR	Burns	8,535
OR-2-73A	East Alvord	OR	Burns	22,240
OR-2-73H	Winter Range	OR	Burns	15,440
OR-2-74	Alvord Desert	OR	Burns	251,060
OR-2-77	Mahogany Ridge	OR	Burns	27,940
OR-2-78	Red Mountain	OR	Burns	16,215
OR-2-81/NV-020-642	Pueblo Mountains	OR	Burns	72,090
OR-2-82	Rincon	OR	Burns	103,965
OR-2-83	Alvord Peak	OR	Burns	16,825
OR-2-84	Basque Hills	OR	Burns	141,410
OR-2-85F	High Steens	OR	Burns	69,740
OR-2-85G	S.Fk. Donner Und Blitzen River	OR	Burns	37,555
OR-2-85H	Home Creek	OR	Burns	26,590
OR-2-86E	Blitzen River	OR	Burns	55,880
OR-2-86F	Little Blitzen Gorge	OR	Burns	9,400
OR-2-87	Bridge Creek	OR	Burns	14,545
OR-2-103	Aldrich Mountain	OR	Burns	9,395
OR-3-18	Castle Rock	OR	Vale	6,200
OR-3-27	Beaver Dam Creek	OR	Vale	19,580
OR-3-31	Camp Creek	OR	Vale	19,200
OR-3-32	Cottonwood Creek	OR	Vale	8,700
OR-3-33	Gold Creek	OR	Vale	13,600
OR-3-35	Sperry Creek	OR	Vale	5,360
OR-3-47	Cedar Mountain	OR	Vale	33,600
OR-3-53	Dry Creek	OR	Vale	23,500
OR-3-56	Dry Creek Buttes	OR	Vale	51,800
OR-3-59	Owyhee Breaks	OR	Vale	13,380
OR-3-73	Blue Canyon	OR	Vale	12,700
OR-3-75	Slocum Creek	OR	Vale	7,600
OR-3-77A	Honeycombs	OR	Vale	39,000
OR-3-77B	Wild Horse Basin	OR	Vale	12,680
OR-3-110	Lower Owyhee Canyon	OR	Vale	75,635

Table 2 - Section 603 Wilderness Study Areas, 5,000 Acres or Larger and Roadless Islands (contined)

UNIT NUMBER	UNIT NAME	STATE	DISTRICT	ACRES
OR-3-111	Saddle Butte	OR	Vale	86,300
OR-3-114	Palomino Hills	OR	Vale	54,600
OR-3-118	Bowden Hills	OR	Vale	59,900
OR-3-120	Clarks Butte	OR	Vale	31,490
OR-3-128	Jordan Craters	OR	Vale	27,900
OR-3-152	Willow Creek	OR	Vale	30,565
OR-3-153/NV-020-859	Disaster Peak	OR	Vale	18,840
OR-3-156	FifteenMile Creek	OR	Vale	51,290
OR-3-157	Oregon Canyon	OR	Vale	42,900
OR-3-162	Twelvemile Creek	OR	Vale	28,600
OR-3-173	Upper West Little Owyhee	OR	Vale	62,500
OR-3-194/ID-16-48A	Lookout Butte	OR	Vale	65,200
OR-3-195/ID-16-48B	Owyhee River Canyon	OR	Vale	190,700
OR-5-1	Thirtymile	OR	Prineville	7,538
OR-5-6	Lower John Day	OR	Prineville	19,587
OR-5-8	North Pole Ridge	OR	Prineville	6,369
OR-5-9	Spring Basin	OR	Prineville	5,982
OR-5-21	Badlands	OR	Prineville	32,221
OR-5-31	North Fork	OR	Prineville	11,225
OR-5-33	South Fork	OR	Prineville	19.631
OR-5-34	Sand Hollow	OR	Prineville	8,791
OR-5-35	Gerry Mountain	OR	Prineville	20,700
OR-5-42	Hampton Butte	OR	Prineville	10,600
OR-5-43	Cougar Well	OR	Prineville	18,435
OR-6-2	Homestead	OR	Vale	7,001
OR-6-3	Sheep Mountain	OR	Vale	7,040
OR-11-17	Soda Mountain	OR	Medford	5,640
OR-12-8	North Sisters Rock	OR	Coos Bay	3
OR-12-14	Zwagg Island	OR	Coos Bay	5
		Total in Oregon		**2,772,970**

Note: Nevada and Idaho acres are reported in the Idaho and Nevada Statewide reports. They are included here for reference only.

portions in isolated sections in this category. WSAs studied under Section 202 in their entirety are listed in Table 3.

Instant Study Areas

The third category consists of areas that were formally identified as natural or primitive areas prior to November 1, 1975, and which Section 603 of FLPMA directs to be studied. These areas were identified by BLM as "Instant Study Areas" (ISA). Five such areas were identified in Oregon and are listed in Table 4.

A study of each of these five areas was conducted and sent to Congress as part of a national package of Instant Study Areas in 1985. These have not received action by Congress and the studies are, there, included in this package. None are being recommended for wilderness designation. One area, Lost Forest ISA, overlaps the boundary road of the

Table 3 - Section 202 Wilderness Study Areas, Less than 5,000 Acres

Unit Number	Unit Name	State	District	Acres
OR-1-146B	Sage Hen Hills	OR	Lakeview	8,520
OR-2-98A	Pine Creek	OR	Prineville	200
OR-2-98C	Sheep Gulch	OR	Prineville	741
OR-2-98D	Indian Creek	OR	Prineville	208
OR-3-74	Upper Leslie Gulch	OR	Vale	3,000
OR-5-14	Deschutes Canyon-Steelhead Falls	OR	Prineville	3,240
OR-6-1	McGraw Creek	OR	Vale	497
OR-11-1	Mountain Lakes	OR	Lakeview	334
	Total			**16,740**

Table 4 - Instant Study Areas

Name of ISA	Acreage
Western Juniper Research Natural Area	600
Lost Forest Research Natural Area [1]	8,000
Little Sink Research Natural Area	80
Brewer Spruce Research Natural Area	210
Douglas-fir Research Natural Area	590
Total	**9,480**

[1]960 additional acres of the Lost Forest ISA were studied in the Sand Dunes WSA (OR-1-24).

Sand Dunes WSA (OR-1-24), and that portion is included with the report for that WSA. Neither portion of this ISA is recommended for wilderness designation.

The Recommendation

Areas Recommended Suitable for Wilderness Designation

The recommended areas consist of 49 proposed new wilderness additions representing some of the most remote, least developed and most outstanding natural public lands in Oregon. They include spectacular, deep-carved, vertical-walled canyons on many of the major river systems in Central and Eastern Oregon, such as the 1,000-foot-deep Owyhee River Canyon WSAs, the 1,600-foot deep John Day River Canyon WSAs and the Sheep Mountain WSA on the 3,000-foot-deep Snake River Hells Canyon.

The recommended areas range from the glaciated Steens Mountain WSAs with their U-shaped valleys and cirques, to precipitous fault scarps in the Abert Rim, Diablo Mountain, Fish Creek Rim, Home Creek, Pueblo Mountains and Trout Creek Mountains WSAs; from the relatively recent (in geologic time) lava flows in the Jordan Craters, Devils Garden, Squaw Ridge, Four Craters and Badlands WSAs with their cinder cones, lava tubes and basaltic

buttes to the small steep-sided ocean islands of the Zwagg Island and North Sisters Rocks WSAs.

They represent relatively undisturbed communities of native bunchgrasses, pristine riparian areas, isolated stands of ponderosa pine in the desert, delicate ferns in lava fissures, groves of aspen and mountain mahogany, extensive stands of juniper and many plants of special interest. These areas provide habitat for threatened species such as the northern bald eagle found in the Sheep Mountain and Owyhee Canyon WSAs, the Whitehorse cutthroat trout, inhabiting the Trout Creek Mountains and Steens Mountain WSAs, and the kit fox, which resides in the Alvord Desert and Sheepshead Mountains WSAs. Sage grouse are found in the West Little Owyhee, Steens and Trout Creek Mountain WSAs and bighorn sheep occur in the Pueblo Mountains, Abert Rim and the Honeycombs WSAs. The Lower John Day River provides habitat for steelhead trout and chinook salmon. The Fish Creek Rim WSA is a high potential site for the reintroduction of the peregrine falcon. Numerous additional species which are federal candidates for listing as threatened or endangered species are found in the recommended areas.

The recommended areas would provide ecological diversity to the National Wilderness Preservation System as most of their ecosystems are underrepresented or completely absent from the present list of wilderness areas nationwide.

Areas Recommended Not Suitable for Wilderness Designation

The areas recommended not suitable include high potential oil and gas resource areas such as the North Fork, Gerry Mountain and Cougar Well WSAs, high potential geothermal areas such as the Alvord Peak, Winter Range and Wild Horse Basin WSAs, high potential mineral resource areas for gold such as Dry Creek Buttes, Homestead and Castle Rock WSAs, and areas with opportunities for new livestock management projects providing additional livestock forage such as the Spaulding, Saddle Butte and Basque Hills WSAs.

Many of the nonsuitable WSAs also had manageability problems such as small size, irregular configuration, critically located inholdings and valid existing rights whose management would particularly complicate wilderness management. The difficulty in managing areas of heavy existing ORV use caused some areas to be recommended nonsuitable.

Other areas do not have significant management conflicts but have limited wilderness characteristics and few if any special features, such as the Bowden Hills, Lookout Butte and Sage Hen Hills WSAs. The natural values of many of these areas will continue to be protected through other forms of administrative management restrictions. Several areas have Area of Critical Environmental Concern designations, off-highway vehicle closures and non-surface occupancy designations.

Key Study Issues

On a statewide basis, the BLM identified resource issues for the wilderness study. These issues and the potential impact resulting from implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary of the Interior are as follows.

Wilderness Values

The WSAs all have the minimum characteristics necessary to qualify for wilderness consideration. These areas are roadless, natural in condition, and possess outstanding opportunities for solitude or for primitive and unconfined types of recreation. Most contain special features, such as unique or sensitive plant and animal species and communities, interesting geologic features, and cultural or paleontological resources. These values would be protected on over 1,278,000 acres in 49 areas that would be designated wilderness under BLM proposals.

All Bailey-Kuchler ecosystems identified in the Oregon study areas would be represented in the NWPS under BLM's proposals. The alpine meadows and barren ecosystem in the Intermountain Sagebrush Province and the sagebrush steppe ecosystem in the Palouse Grassland Province would be represented for the first time through proposed wilderness designation. Four additional ecosystems found in combination and not presently represented in the NWPS are included in the proposals.

The addition of these 49 wilderness areas would better balance the geographic distribution of wilderness areas in the NWPS, since the surrounding region presently contains little wilderness.

On the 1,528,000 acres of WSAs that would not be designated as wilderness, the wilderness values would be subject to the effects of projected management actions, such as energy and mineral development, range and wildlife projects, utility line construction and timber harvest activities. These activities are projected to both directly and indirectly impair wilderness values over approximately 520,000 acres with probable further declines from other unforeseen actions over the long term.

Energy and Mineral Development

Lands designated as wilderness are withdrawn from mineral entry and leasing subject to rights associated with valid claims and leases existing at the time of designation. Proposed designation would withdraw over 1,278,000 acres from all forms of appropriation. Mineral surveys were conducted on all WSAs for study purposes in order to determine their potential for mineral occurrence. This potential does not consider the development potential or economics of development, only the likelihood of mineral occurrence. In addition, the U.S. Geological Survey and Bureau of Mines conducted mineral surveys of each of the WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The survey reports accompany this package for more detailed information.

Using the mineral survey information, the studies predicted reasonable foreseeable mineral development in the WSAs for impact analysis purposes. Under BLM's wilderness proposals, projected development of 12 oil and gas production wells, one 20-megawatt geothermal powerplant, 13 metallic mines and eight non-metallic/evaporite mines would be precluded by wilderness designation. Projected development of 23 oil and gas production wells, five geothermal powerplants (totaling 60 megawatts), 18 metallic mines and 18 non-metallic/evaporite mines would occur in the nonsuitable areas. It is important to remember that these are projections of possible development only.

Vegetation

Activities projected to occur under the BLM proposals would influence existing vegetation in the WSAs not recommended for wilderness. Vegetation change would occur in three ways. Vegetation alteration (from harvest of timber and minor wood products and from projected vegetation manipulation for livestock grazing and wildlife habitat management) would occur on over 100,000 acres. Vegetation removal (from projected energy and mineral development and construction of utility corridors and livestock and wildlife facilities) would occur on approximately 43,000 acres designated nonwilderness. Natural revegetation resulting from closure of roads and ways would occur on over 600 acres.

In addition to the predicted vegetation changes above, the condition of riparian vegetation growing along over 190 miles of perennial streams would improve in 19 WSAs due to riparian fence construction and closure of roads and ways. There would be a decline in riparian vegetation along 12 miles of streams due to lack of physical protection from existing and projected resource uses in three WSAs. The condition of the remaining 335 miles of riparian vegetation would be unchanged.

Projected livestock increases would produce higher utilization and less residual ground cover in 24 study areas designated nonwilderness. Lower utilization and more residual ground cover than at present are expected in three WSAs where reductions are projected.

There are 30 WSAs with plant species of special interest. Of these, actions in eight WSAs designated nonwilderness are projected to occur in the vicinity of habitat of special interest species and could potentially threaten these populations. Where such conflict exists, mitigation measures and monitoring would avoid or minimize impacts to these populations.

Wildlife

Wildlife habitat would generally be protected by wilderness designation under the BLM proposals. Habitat would be altered or reduced on approximately 150,000 acres as a result of projected energy and mineral, livestock, wildlife, timber and utility corridor developments in the areas not recommended for wilderness.

Over 50,000 acres of habitat change are a result of projected implementation of wildlife projects in the nonsuitable portions. These projects are designed to improve habitat, and oftentimes, populations of various species of wildlife. Development of water sources benefits most species in the WSAs, while brush control projects tend to benefit primarily big game species, such as deer and antelope. These brush control projects can have a detrimental effect

on other species of wildlife, such as sage grouse or small mammals and birds, which depend on brushy areas for nesting and cover.

Under BLM proposals for the WSAs, reintroduction of bighorn sheep to their native ranges would occur in 11 WSAs. However, management actions in nine WSAs are projected to occur in the vicinity of known or suspected populations of special status wildlife species (i.e., Federally listed threatened or endangered species, candidates for Federal listing, sensitive wildlife species, or State listed species). In accordance with current laws, regulations and policies designed to protect these species, compliance with consultation, mitigation, and monitoring requirements would minimize or avoid impacts to these species.

Livestock Grazing

Both Congressional direction and BLM policy allow the continuation of existing grazing use in designated wilderness. No reductions in use levels would occur as a result of wilderness designation. Some inconvenience may result from restrictions on vehicle use for livestock operations, however, vehicle use would be allowed to continue under permit where nonvehicular access is not practical. Consequently, no serious impacts to livestock operators would occur under wilderness designation.

Livestock projects have been proposed in many of the WSAs for such purposes as improving livestock management, accommodating increased numbers of livestock or eliminating potential shortages of livestock forage. Wilderness designation can preclude these projects depending on their intended purpose and analysis of their potential influence on existing wilderness values.

Of over 150,000 AUMs of currently estimated livestock use in the WSAs, use would increase by over 15,000 AUMs in 18 WSAs due to projects and by about 20,000 AUMs in 11 WSAs through allocation of available, but currently unallocated, forage. A decrease of approximately 300 AUMs is projected in three WSAs as a result of projected energy and mineral developments removing existing forage or from projects being precluded that were proposed to eliminate potential shortages of available forage.

Wood Products Harvest

Timber harvest and harvest of firewood, posts and poles would be precluded by wilderness designation. Under the proposals, wilderness designation would result in foregone timber harvest from over 600 acres of available commercial forest land. The average annual timber yield foregone would be 154 thousand board feet (Mbf). This impact would be insignificant in light of the approximately 17 million board-foot average annual timber yield from Public Domain lands in Oregon. Average annual timber harvest of approximately 156 Mbf would occur in four WSAs.

Harvest of firewood, posts and poles would be precluded on approximately 7,600 acres suitable for such harvest. This loss of forest products would amount to an estimated 0.9 percent of the total production of such products from BLM woodlands in Oregon. Harvest of minor forest products would occur on over 2,200 acres.

Recreation Use

Oregon WSAs receive over 130,000 visitor days of recreation use each year. Wilderness designation precludes motorized forms of recreation, while it often enhances opportunities for primitive types of recreation by eliminating influences of motorized use from vehicle ways in the WSAs and protecting areas from potential human development. Under the wilderness proposals, recreation use of the WSAs is expected to experience a net increase of approximately 10,000 annual visitor days. This change in visitor use is expected to result from a projected increase of almost 20,000 visitor days in 22 WSAs and a projected decrease of approximately 10,000 visitor days in 18 WSAs, with the remaining WSAs experiencing no substantial changes in current recreation use.

Summary of Public Comments on the Studies

Public involvement has been a cornerstone of the wilderness inventory and study processes. A total of 90 public meetings and hearings were held during the wilderness inventory and study phases. Nearly 4,500 public comments were received during the wilderness inventory alone.

Over 3,300 public comments were received during the 120-day comment period on the Draft Oregon Wilderness EIS and the 90-day comment period on the Supplement to the Draft EIS. These comments

were received in the form of written comments throughout the comment periods and oral testimonies obtained at the 24 public hearings held throughout Oregon, in Boise, Idaho, and in Reno, Nevada. These letters and oral testimonies included approximately 8,000 specific comments addressing the overall statewide wilderness study and individual WSAs.

Additionally, over 500 public comments (written and oral) were received on the Owyhee Canyonlands EIS prepared by BLM's Boise District in Idaho. That EIS addressed the Owyhee River Canyon WSA in Oregon and Idaho along with seven other study areas in Idaho and Nevada. A total of five hearings on that study were held in Oregon, Idaho and Nevada.

The Ochoco National Forest and Crooked River National Grassland Management Plan/FEIS identified 206 public comments focusing on the wilderness issue. Most of those comments addressed the Deschutes River-Steelhead Falls WSA.

Federal, state and local agencies with an interest or jurisdiction within the study areas were asked to comment on each of the EISs.

Approximately 85 percent of the comments received on the studies were concerned with the wilderness suitability and nonsuitability recommendations contained in the alternatives (primarily the proposed action) or with the specific rationale for the recommendations. About 10 percent of the comments addressed the adequacy or accuracy of the information and alternatives discussed in the EISs. The remaining 5 percent either officially stated that the respondent had no formal comments to make or contained no substantive comments relative to the EISs or the areas studied.

The EIS adequacy comments were used to revise the analysis and content in the final EISs. The comments concerned primarily with the wilderness recommendations and the rationale for those recommendations were used to revise alternatives analyzed in the final EISs and to fine-tune BLM's proposals subsequent to the EISs. Of all recommendation-related comments received on the draft EISs, approximately 30 percent responded to the overall statewide recommendations. These comments are briefly summarized below. The remaining 70 percent, which referred to specific WSAs or groups of WSAs, are summarized in the individual wilderness study reports for those areas.

Approximately 82 percent of those comments addressing statewide recommendations generally favored wilderness designation for some or all of the WSAs. The remaining 18 percent generally opposed designation of any more wilderness in the state.

With respect to the alternatives analyzed in the EISs, approximately 18 percent of the comments supported not designating any wilderness (the No Wilderness alternative), 33 percent supported designating all wilderness study areas as wilderness (the All Wilderness alternative), 42 percent supported more wilderness than the All Wilderness alternative (primarily the public-initiated Sage and Sierra Club alternatives that combined large areas and included lands that were dropped from further consideration after determining, during the wilderness inventory phase, that they did not meet basic Wilderness Act criteria), 2 percent supported BLM's proposals (the Proposed Action), and the remaining 5 percent supported the various other alternatives.

From the perspective of BLM's proposed action for all WSAs in the state, approximately 79 percent of the comments supported more wilderness than the proposed action and 19 percent supported less wilderness. As stated above, approximately 2 percent of the comments received supported BLM's proposed action in the draft EISs.

The most frequently used reasons for supporting wilderness designation on a statewide basis were:

- Wilderness will protect ecosystems, ecological diversity, gene pools and nongame wildlife.
- Wilderness will preserve our natural heritage for future generations.
- Wilderness values outweigh competing resource values.
- If these areas are not designated now, they will be lost forever.
- The nation needs more wilderness.
- Wilderness designation will increase tourism and diversify the local economy.
- BLM overstated the value of competing resource uses.
- BLM inappropriately dropped qualifying areas during the inventory by using anthropocentric

criteria (i.e., outstanding opportunities for solitude or for primitive and unconfined types of recreation).

- Wilderness preserves resources, such as minerals, for future emergency use.

The most frequent reasons cited for supporting no wilderness or less wilderness than the BLM proposals were:

- The region, the State of Oregon, and the nation as a whole already have enough wilderness.
- Wilderness is only for the elite. The elderly, the very young, and handicapped people are locked out of wilderness areas, as are people without long vacations or enough money.
- Wilderness designation is believed by some to be incompatible with the multiple use mandate under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act.
- Wilderness designation will have adverse impacts on the economy, especially on the livestock and mineral industries.
- People cannot use wilderness, especially in desert areas, without vehicles.
- The areas under consideration are already wild. More restrictive designations are not needed to protect them.
- Wilderness designation would waste resources that could be used otherwise.
- Existing forms of recreation (e.g., off-highway vehicle use or sightseeing from vehicles on the Steens Loop Road) in areas under study are more appropriate and more popular uses than wilderness use.
- Road closures recommended under some alternatives are not appropriate.
- Wilderness allows ranchers to unfairly continue to use vehicles, while others cannot.

Other Pertinent Information Relating to Oregon Statewide Recommendations

Adjacent Forest Service Areas

Four BLM WSAs lie adjacent to existing wilderness areas administered by the U.S. Forest Service, separated only by administrative boundaries. The Strawberry Mountain WSAs (Pine Creek, OR-2-98A, Sheep Gulch, OR-2-98C and Indian Creek, OR-2-98D, which total 1,149 acres, adjoin the 68,700-acre Strawberry Mountain Wilderness administered by the Malheur National Forest. BLM's 334-acre Mountain Lakes WSA (OR-11-1) adjoins the 23,071-acre Mountain Lakes Wilderness administered by the Winema National Forest.

In addition, two national forest roadless areas designated as further planning areas and one undesignated national forest roadless area lie adjacent to BLM WSAs. Through cooperative agreements between BLM and the U.S. Forest Service, these adjoining areas were jointly studied with one agency designated as lead. The suitability of jointly studied lands is addressed in the designated lead agency's Plan/EIS with review and input provided by the cooperating agency.

BLM's Steelhead Falls WSA (OR-5-14), containing 3,240 acres, lies adjacent to the 9,955-acre Deschutes Canyon Further Planning Area in the Crooked River National Grassland, managed by the Ochoco National Forest. The suitability of the Steelhead Falls WSA is addressed in the Forest Service's Ochoco Forest Plan/EIS, which was for issued in August of 1989. That document recommends nonwilderness for both the Deschutes Canyon and Steelhead Falls study areas.

BLM's Homestead WSA (OR-6-2), containing 7,001 acres, adjoins 7,654 roadless acres in the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest which were designated for further planning in the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area Comprehensive Management Plan. All 14,655 acres were analyzed and addressed in the Statewide Wilderness EIS. In addition, BLM's North Fork WSA (OR-5-31), containing 11,225 acres,

adjoins 1,125 roadless acres in the Ochoco National Forest. All 12,110 acres were analyzed in BLM's Statewide Wilderness EIS. The Forest Service is the cooperating agency in this EIS with respect only to these two joint WSAs. The Forest Service concurs with the recommendation of no wilderness for these two areas.

Other BLM WSAs (Devils Garden, OR-1-2, and Aldrich Mountain, OR-2-103) adjoin national forest roadless areas which were released by the Oregon Wilderness Act of 1984. These adjoining areas were released from further review of wilderness values until the national forest plan revisions, expected to take place in the 1990s.

Wild and Scenic Rivers

In 1984, an Act of Congress was passed designating two segments of the Owyhee River in Oregon as components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, to be administered as a wild river by the Secretary of the Interior. The upper segment is almost entirely within the Owyhee River Canyon WSA (OR-3-195), which is addressed in the Owyhee Canyonlands Wilderness EIS. Most of the lower segment, 50 miles from Crooked Creek to the Owyhee Reservoir, is within the Owyhee Breaks (OR-3-59) and Lower Owyhee Canyon (OR-3-110) WSAs.

Its designation as a Federal wild river has withdrawn from disposal mineral leasing and location of mining claims on all public lands within 0.25 mile on each side of the river where the mineral estate is owned by the Federal Government. The legislative record also states explicitly that livestock grazing may be allowed to continue within the boundary of the wild and scenic river corridor.

In 1988, the Omnibus Oregon Wild and Scenic Rivers Act was passed designating approximately 1,400 river miles on 40 rivers as wild, scenic or recreational river segments. Of these rivers, a total of 107.5 miles in four rivers flow through nine of the WSAs in this study. Boundary delineations and management plans are currently being prepared for these river segments. On the 62.6 river miles in six WSAs designated as wild, lands within 0.25 mile on each side of the river, where the mineral estate is owned by the Federal Government, were legislatively withdrawn from disposal, mineral leasing and location of mining claims.

Wilderness and Wild River designations pose nearly identical management requirements of protection and preservation of natural values. Recreational river status would be subject to Wilderness Act provisions for management.

Wilderness Study Area Combinations

In some areas, two or more WSAs are located adjacent to each other, separated only by a boundary road. In situations when the adjacent WSAs were similar in character and their issues and resources were nearly identical, they were analyzed in the Wilderness EIS as a combination or complex of areas rather than individual WSAs. An example is the Trout Creek Mountain complex of WSAs in which five WSAs in the Vale District are all located in the Trout Creek Mountains of southeastern Oregon. These WSAs are adjacent to one another, and are separated only by low standard dirt roads that are rarely traveled. All of these WSAs have similar topographic and vegetative features. This analytical approach seemed more logical than that of analyzing such WSAs individually, without regard to their common resources, management concerns, and wilderness values.

Although the EIS did identify boundaries, resources, and other specifics for each individual area, a single recommendation was developed for each identified combination or complex. In some cases, the recommendation identifies that certain low standard boundary roads would be closed and two or more WSAs be combined into a single wilderness area. In these situations, the individual WSAs would be managed as units of a larger wilderness. The following Table 5 identifies WSAs that were analyzed as combinations.

Water Rights

An issue of general concern is the effect of wilderness designation on existing and future water rights and important recreational uses such as whitewater boating. Many of the WSAs recommended for wilderness contain water-related values, including springs or impoundments which provide water for wildlife, and possibly human use. A number of the WSAs recommended for wilderness have stream flows which, in addition to the uses already mentioned, support riparian vegetation, fish populations and may also provide water to downstream users.

Table 5 - WSAs Analyzed as Combinations

WSA Complex	Individual WSAs Name	Number	Acres Suitable for Wilderness	Acres Not Suitable for Wilderness
Sheepshead Mountains Group	Sheepshead Mountains	OR-2-72C	45,705	8,685
	Wildcat Canyon	OR-2-72D	34,830	0
	Heath Lake	OR-2-72F	0	20,520
	Table Mountain	OR-2-72I	25,185	15,407
	West Peak	OR-2-72J	0	8,535
	Palomino Hills	OR-3-114	0	54,600
	Total		**105,720**	**107,747**
Alvord Desert and East Alvord	Alvord Desert	OR-2-74	69,165	181,895
	East Alvord	OR-2-73A	0	22,240
	Total		**69,165**	**204,135**
High Steens and Little Blitzen Gorge	High Steens	OR-2-85F	36,440	34,340
	Little Blitzen Gorge	OR-2-86F	4,700	4,800
	Total		**41,140**	**39,140**
Strawberry Mountain Group	Pine Creek	OR-2-98A	0	200
	Sheep Gulch	OR-2-98C	0	741
	Indian Creek	OR-2-98D	0	208
	Total		**0**	**1,149**
Camp Creek Group	Camp Creek	OR-3-31	17,770	1,430
	Cottonwood Creek	OR-3-32	7,520	1,180
	Gold Creek	OR-3-33	15,800	0
	Sperry Creek	OR-3-35	5,360	0
	Total		**46,450**	**2,610**
Trout Creek Combination	Willow Creek	OR-3-152	26,130	4,435
	Disaster Peak	OR-3-153/NV-020-859	17,540	1,300
	Fifteenmile Creek	OR-3-156	51,260	30
	Oregon Canyon	OR-3-157	42,900	0
	Twelvemile Creek	OR-3-162	26,240	3,340
	Total		**164,070**	**9,105**
Thirtymile and Lower John Day	Thirtymile	OR-5-1	7,332	206
	Lower John Day	OR-5-6	20,384	1,636
	Total		**27,716**	**1,842**
South Fork and Sand Hollow	South Fork	OR-5-33	17,001	2,630
	Sand Hollow	OR-5-34	8,391	400
	Total		**25,392**	**3,030**
Hampton Butte and Cougar Well	Hampton Butte	OR-5-42	0	10,600
	Cougar Well	OR-5-43	0	18,435
	Total		**0**	**29,035**
North Sisters Rocks and Zwagg Island	North Sisters Rocks	OR-12-8	3	0
	Zwagg Island	OR-12-17	5	0
	Total		**8**	**0**

A 1988 Interior Solicitor's opinion review for the Attorney General concludes that The Wilderness Act itself does not create federally reserved water rights. Only specific Congressional language on reserved water rights in the designation legislation can create federal reserved water rights for a wilderness area. Consequently, BLM will file for appropriations for beneficial uses under Oregon State law.

Findings of Geological Survey (USGS) and Bureau of Mines (BM) Mineral Surveys

USGS and BM studies identified areas of mineral potential on WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. This information was added to the Department's initial evaluation of mineral potential which was developed for all WSAs. A comparison of the minerals information available previously and the new USGS and BM findings, when applicable, is included in the site-specific analysis of each WSA. This information is provided for Congress to consider in establishing final wilderness boundaries for designated wilderness areas. Specific mineral survey reports by USGS/BM are available for each suitable WSA.

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